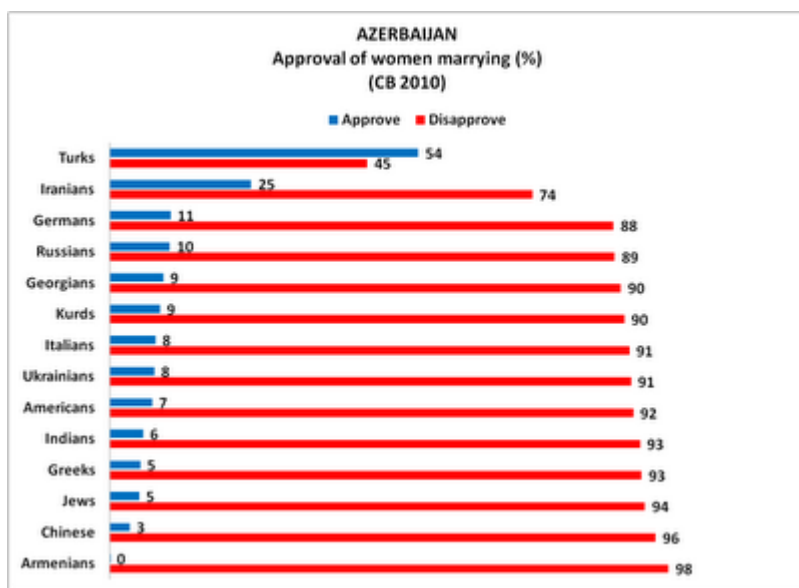


Intermarriage in the South Caucasus

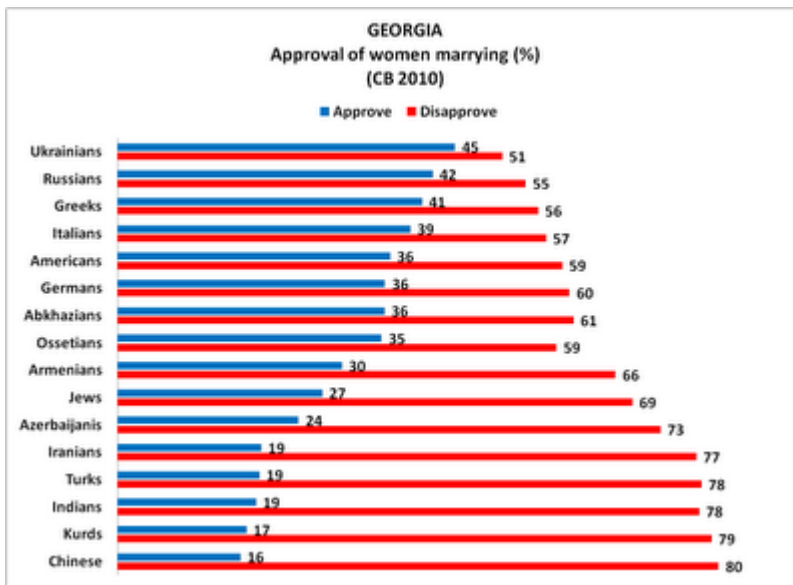
As a continuation of the blog, [Forbidden Love: Attitudes Toward Interethnic Marriage in the South Caucasus](#), this blog focuses only on approval/disapproval rates and the socio-cultural preferences of women marrying men from different ethnic and national groups.

According to the 1996-1997 World Value Survey, 98% of both Azerbaijanis and Armenians and 99% of Georgians considered the family to be important in their lives. Marriage can be viewed as an important step towards the formation of families and the family itself can have an important impact on individual identity formation.

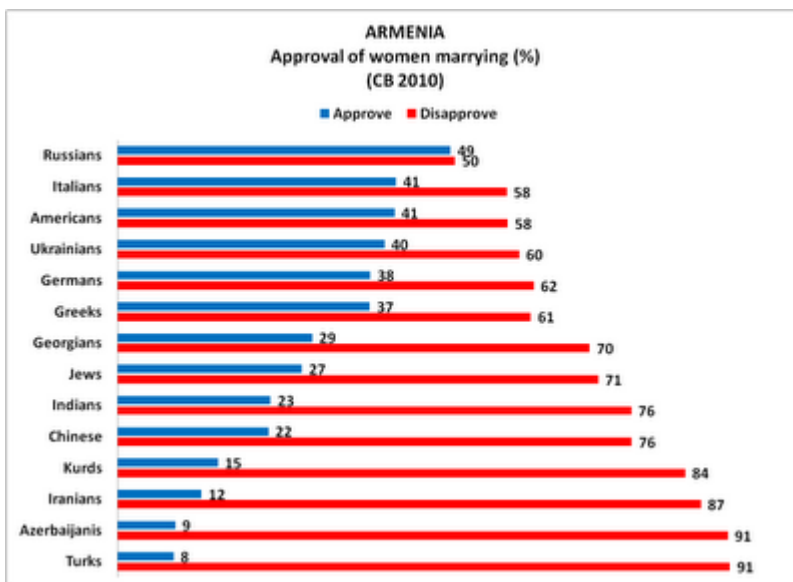
Data from the 2010 Caucasus Barometer shows that 54% of Azerbaijanis approve of an Azerbaijani woman marrying a Turkish man and this was the highest rated result for the question. Similar Turkic identity and linguistic similarity between the nations may be part of the reason behind this. Azerbaijanis have much lower levels of approval for marriage with other groups, ranging from 74% disapproval of marriage with Iranians to 98% disapproval of marriage with Armenians.



While there is more disapproval than approval of intermarriage in all three countries of the South Caucasus, Georgians expressed higher rates of approval towards intermarriage than Azerbaijanis. 45% of Georgians approve of Georgian women marrying Ukrainian men, followed by the second and third highest approval rating for marriage with Russians (42%) and Greeks (41%), respectively. There are slightly lower levels of approval (between 39% and 35%) for marriages with Italians, Americans, Germans, Ossetians and Abkhazians. The highest rate of disapproval (between 77% and 80%) was for marriages with Iranians, Turkish, Indians, Kurds and Chinese. Analyzing these data, it is possible to notice that Georgians have the highest levels of approval for marriages with predominately Orthodox groups, while they show the highest levels of disapproval for marriages with some non-Christian groups. The strong role of the religion in Georgian society might explain preferences to marry with Orthodox and other Christian groups. For example, according to the CB 2010, 90% of Georgians consider religion to be important in their daily lives.



Armenians have lower levels of approval for intermarriage than Georgians, but they show more approval for such marriages than Azerbaijanis. Russians have the highest approval rate (49%) followed by Italians, Americans, Ukrainians, Germans and Greeks with slightly lower levels of approval ranging from 41% to 37%. The highest disapproval levels are for marriages with Kurds, Iranians, Turks and Azerbaijanis. Levels of approval/disapproval for Armenian women marrying other ethnicities may be influenced by political preferences. For example, [both the Armenian government and Armenian people have positive attitudes towards Russia](#). Also, the fact that Armenians have more positive attitudes towards marriage with Russians than with other groups might include the fact that there is a large number of Armenians living in Russia (2,250,000 according to [armeniandiaspora.com](#)), and both knowledge and use of the Russian language is widespread in Armenia. The CB 2010 suggests that only 5% of Armenians have no basic knowledge of Russian.



This data show that attitudes towards intermarriage in the South Caucasus may be influenced by a variety of different factors in this diverse region. Thus, it is interesting to consider what roles factors such as religion, political alliances and ethnicity, among others, can play in marital preferences.